

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-11

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S E C R E T ABU DHABI 1579

E.O. 11652: XGDS-
TAGS: XA, CU, UR, MPOL
SUBJECT: SOVIET AND CUBAN ROLE IN AFRICA

REF: STATE 136699

1. UAE IS INCREASINGLY WORRIED OVER CUBAN AND SOVIET ROLE IN AFRICA
ESPECIALLY WHERE IT IS PERCEIVED AS AFFECTING ARAB INTERESTS. MOST OF
THE ATTENTION THUS FAR HAS FOCUSSED ON SOMALIA AND ERITREA; SOMALIS
AND
ERITREAN SEPARATISTS HAVE RECEIVED UAE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE AND UAE
HAS HELPED IN TRANSFER OF ARMS BY EGYPT TO SOMALIA. MORE RECENTLY,
MEDIA HAS GIVEN EXTENSIVE COVERAGE TO DRAMATIC EVENTS IN SHABA PROVINCE

WHICH HAVE HEIGHTENED UAE GOVERNMENT AWARENESS OF SOVIET AND CUBAN
ROLE IN TRAINING DISAFFECTED ELEMENTS IN AFRICA. SENIOR OFFICIALS HAVE

INQUIRED ABOUT REPORTS US SUPPLYING ARMS FOR A PAN-AFRICAN FORCE AND
ASKED IF IT WAS TRUE THAT USG IS COLLABORATING WITH SAUDI
ARABIA AND IRAN TO GIVE PERMISSION TO TRANSFER ARMS TO
SOMALIA AND ZAIRE.

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2. WHILE UAE OFFICIALS HAVE NOT REALLY TRIED TO DEFINE
ATTENDANT PROBLEMS WITH GROWING SOVIET AND CUBAN ROLE
IN AFRICA, THEY OBVIOUSLY SEE EXAMPLE IN AFRICA AS HAVING
ITS REPRECUSIONS IN ARABIAN PENINSULA. PRESIDENTIAL
COURT CHAMBERLAIN SHAIKH SUROOR, FOR EXAMPLE, HAS
FOCUSSED ON CUBAN INVOLVEMENT IN SOUTH YEMEN. THERE IS

CONCERN THAT CUBANS MAY BE TRAINING SOUTH YEMENIS AGAIN TO LAUNCH A NEW CAPAING AGAINST OMAN'S DHOFAR PROVINCE OR AGAINST NORTH YEMEN. OBVIOUSLY, SUROOR BELIEVES ANY SUCCESSES CUBANS HAVE IN AFRICA WILL EMBOLDEN THEM TO TRY ELSEWHERE AS WELL WHERE SOVIETS SEEKING EXPAND INFLUENCE.

3. UAE LEADERSHIP CONSIDERS THAT THERE IS VERY LITTLE IT CAN DO ABOUT SITUATION. IN UAE EYES, CUBAN INVOLVEMENT IN ETHIOPIA HAS PUT CUBA OUTSIDE OF THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT. AS MINSTATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS HAS TOLD US (ABU DHABI 1313), UAE WILL NOT PARTICIPATE IN ANY NAC ACTIVITY IN HAVANA AND UAE CLEARLY BECOMING INCREASINGLY UNCOMFORTABLE IN HAVING CUBA WITHIN NAC MOVEMENT. AS FOR PRESCEIPTION FOR HANDLING AFRICAN PROBLEMS, BELIEVE UAE WOULD ECHO RECENT SAUDI PRAISE OF FRENCH FOR INTERVENING IN ZAIRE. LESS CLEAR WHETHER UAE WOULD MATERIALLY SUPPORT SOME KIND OF PAN AFRICAN FORCE THAT COULD BE USED IN SITUATIONS SUCH AS SHABA PROVIDED SUCH A FORCE COULD BE ORGAIZED. AT SAME TIME, UAE FEELS THAT MANY OF PROBLEMS PLAGUING AFRICAN LEADERS ARE RESULT OF THEIR OWN SHORTCOMINGS. AS ONE INTELLIGENT OBSERVER OF INTERNATIONAL SCENE, MIN PLANNING SAID GHUBBASH, HAS COMMENTED TO AMBASSADOR, RECENT FRENCH/BELGAIN/US EFFORT HAS SAVED PRESIDENT MOBUTU FOR A SECOND TIME (THE MOROCCANS LAST YEAR BEING FIRST TIME). BUT IF THE US AND WEST EUROPEANS DO NOT INSIST THAT MOBUTU GOVERN MORE EFFECTIVELY, IT WILL BE VERY DIFFI-
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CULT TO PREVENT STILL ANOTHER RECURRENCE OF WHAT HAS JUST TAKEN PLACE IN SHABA.

4. AT CONCLUSION OF RECENT MEETING ON ANOTHER TOPIC, FORMIN SUWAIDI INDICATED HE WOULD LIKE TO MEET WITH ME AGAIN SOON TO DISCUSS ISTUATION IN HORN OF AFRICA, AFGHANISTAN, AND IRAN. I AM SEEKING EARLY APPOINTMENT FOR THIS PURPOSE AND MAY BE ABLE TO REPORT MORE AUTHORITATIVELY ON UAEG VIEWS AFTERWARDS.

DICKMAN

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NNN

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